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Tainted By The CIA

The director of Harvard's Center for Middle Eastern Studies has resigned as a result of the school's investigation of his acceptance of money from the Central Intelligence Agency for a book and for a conference on Islamic fundamentalism at the university. The director, Nadav Safran, will remain a tenured member of the Harvard faculty, but the incident will compromise his scholarly standing and, worse, that of the center and Harvard. The funds for the book were reported by Prof. Safran; those for the conference were not. As to the latter, Prof. Safran declared that the CIA is "like any other source of funds."

It is not. Other sources of money for scholarly undertakings do not come from organizations that carry out espionage, po-

litical assassinations, secret activities designed to undermine legitimate governments and covert warfare. Other sources of academic financing do not demand — as the CIA did in the case of Prof. Safran's book, "Saudi Arabia: The Ceaseless Quest for Security" — the right of censorship and that the publisher be kept ignorant of the source of financing.

Harvard has no prohibition against its faculty accepting CIA funds as long as they are open and are not accompanied by conditions — such as those imposing censorship — that violate principles of academic freedom. The lesson of the Safran case is old and plain: Institutions of free inquiry cannot easily coexist with institutions that exist to serve clandestine ends.